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SEPTORIA LEAF SPOT OF SWEET GUM

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Sweet gum (Liquidambar styraciflua L.), also known as American sweet gum, red gum, or bilsted, belongs to the family Hamamelidaceae (4). The tree is found from Connecticut to Mexico, the mountains of Central America, and Venezuela, attaining its best development in the southeastern United States (2,4). The wood is used for furniture, cabinetwork, fancy boxes, and veneers. The resin (storax or styrax) from sweet gum is considered a medicine for the common cold, and is also used as an additive to chewing gum (2,3). The commercial supply of styrax comes from Guatemala, Honduras, and Venezuela (2).

Septoria liquidambaris Cke. & Ell. is one of several frequently encountered leaf-spotting fungi on sweet gum (1).

Fig. 1. Leaf spots on Liquidambar styraciflua caused by Septoria liquidambaris. X 1.2. (DPI Photo #88053 by Jeffrey W. Lotz).

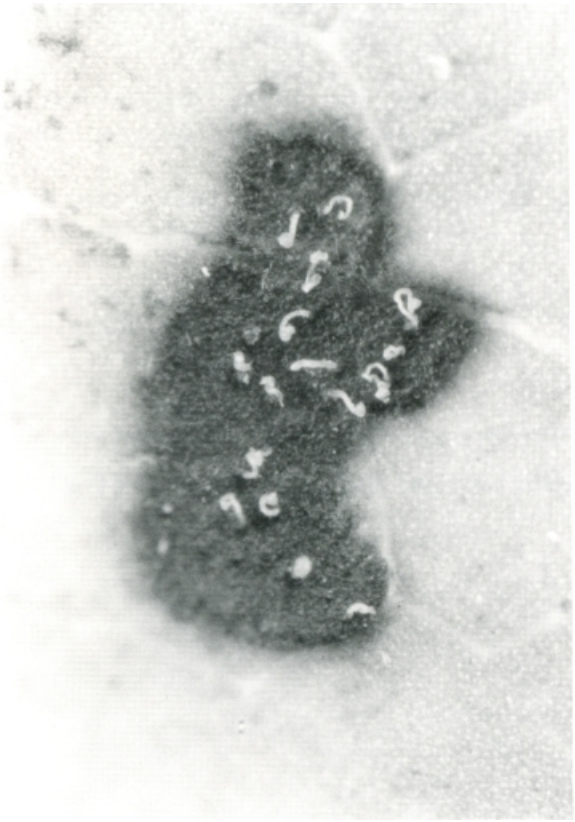

Fig. 2. Pycnidia, embedded in leaf tissue on the lower surface, exuding conidia in tendrils. X 22.4. (DPI Photo 488054 by Jeffrey W. Lotz).

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Symptoms and Signs. Spots are dark brown, angular to irregular, up to 4 mm across and with a diffuse yellow halo. Spots may coalesce to form larger spots (Fig. 1). Pycnidia (fruiting structures) develop on the lower leaf surface, are embedded in leaf tissue, and may exude conidia in tendrils through a wide ostiole (Fig. 2).

Control. No fungicide is specifically labeled for use on L. styraciflua. However, if control is desired, benomyl which is EPA-registered for use on ornamentals (5) may be tried. Good sanitation through the removal and destruction of infected leaves would help to reduce the inoculum level and aid in control.

Survey and Detection. Look for dark brown, angular to irregular necrotic leaf spots and for fungal fruiting structures on the lower leaf surface.

Literature Cited.

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